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# ICT4D Middle East Learning Workshop

Dead Sea, Jordan

13-17 April 2010

## Workshop Report





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## 1. Workshop Background

This report presents the outcomes of the learning workshop of the Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) programme in the Middle East. The workshop was organised by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada, in collaboration with the Royal Scientific Society (RSS), from 13-17 April 2010 in the Dead Sea, Jordan. The workshop was attended by 18 participants representing the 4 projects funded by ICT4D Middle East: The Royal Scientific Society of Jordan, Birzeit University in Palestine, The Youth Leadership Development Foundation in Yemen and The Syria Trust for Development, as well as a team to researchers from the American University in Beirut who is currently working on a project proposal in Lebanon.

## 2. Participants

Workshop participants were selected from partner organizations that have projects funded within the framework of the ICT4D-ME programme. Three participants were nominated by each project leader and selected by the programme consultant and senior programme specialist. Invitations were sent to 18 participants representing the four projects (including a team of 3 participants from the American University in Beirut – Bicharaf - who is working on the development of a research project in Lebanon). Table 1 shows the complete list of participants. Gender distribution of the workshop participants was as follows: female 7 (39%), male: 11 (61%).

Table 1: Workshop Participants

Name	Last Name	Organisation	Country
Marwan	Tarazi	Birzeit University	Palestine
Baher	Dkaik	Birzeit University	Palestine
Edward	Jaser	Royal Scientific Society	Jordan
Islam	Ahmad	Royal Scientific Society	Jordan
Arafat	Awajan	Royal Scientific Society	Jordan
Taghreed	Kittaneh	Royal Scientific Society	Jordan
Yasin	Al-Btoush	Royal Scientific Society	Jordan
Gabool	Al-Mutawakeel	Youth Leadership Development Foundation	Yemen
Safa	Rawiah	Youth Leadership Development Foundation	Yemen
Ahmed	Almarwani	Youth Leadership Development Foundation	Yemen
Ahmed	Al-Nahari	Youth Leadership Development Foundation	Yemen
Eiad	Yafi	Syria Trust for Development	Syria
Mais	Alkhalil	Syria Trust for Development	Syria
Rasha	Saegh	Syria Trust for Development	Syria
Tony	Feghali	American University of Beirut	Lebanon
Sarah	Hatoum	American University of Beirut	Lebanon
Wadih	Renno	American University of Beirut	Lebanon



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Raed	Sharif	Syracuse University	Canada
Anas	Tawileh	Consultant	Canada
William	New	Consultant	Switzerland
Adel	El-Zaim	IDRC	Egypt

Figure 1 shows a group photo of the participants.



Figure 1: Workshop Participants

### 3. Workshop Activities

Table 2 lists the main activities of the workshop.

Table 2: Main workshop activities



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Activity	Description
Project updates	<p>In order to familiarise the group with the research activities and status of the projects being implemented by the research partners, representatives from these partner organisations presented updates on their respective projects. Five projects were presented in this session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Youth in Technology for Community Development, implemented by Youth Leadership Development Foundation in Yemen</li><li>• I Can We Can, implemented by the Syria Trust for Development in Syria</li><li>• SOHITCOM, implemented by the Royal Scientific Society in Jordan</li><li>• Seeding the Development of Knowledge Based Industries, implemented by Birzeit University in Palestine</li><li>• Bicharaf, proposed by the American University in Beirut, Lebanon</li></ul>
Peer Learning	<p>In this session, participants were encouraged to share with their colleagues the experiences they encountered and the lessons they learned during the implementation of their research projects. Participants agreed that their research projects within the ICT4D Middle East programme gave them great opportunities to develop and strengthen their research skills, understand new concepts related to collaboration and communication among researchers, learn new approaches to communicate with decision makers and the wider public, build organisational capacity in project management, monitoring and evaluation, and get exposure to emerging technologies such as free and open source software.</p>
Project Evaluation and Outcome Mapping	<p>At this stage of project implementation, all research teams are working on evaluating their work and assessing the impact of their interventions. In order to strengthen the teams' capabilities in monitoring and evaluation, several interactive activities were conducted during the second day of the workshop. The day started with a group exercise in which participants were asked to define evaluation and discuss these definitions. A refresher of the main concepts and ideas of Outcome Mapping was presented, and the each project team stated the vision and mission statements of their projects, and received feedback from the other participants and facilitators.</p> <p>Building on this foundation, the artifacts involved in the implementation of Outcome Mapping were introduced, including the identification of boundary partners, the outcome challenge for each boundary partner, and progress markers. Each research team was requested to develop and present these artifacts for their respective projects for discussion and feedback. In the last session, the different journals used for documentation in Outcome Mapping were reviewed and participants were encouraged to devise the relevant journals for their projects as a follow up activity after the workshop.</p>
Field Visit to a remote	<p>The purpose of the field visit was to give the participants the opportunity to</p>



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medical center to see a demo of SOHITCOM	<p>experience the actual implementation of SOHITCOM in a health centre in rural Jordan. The group travelled to a rural community in the municipality of Ma'an and learned firsthand from the project beneficiaries in the health centre about their experiences and perceptions of the project.</p> <p>The director of the health centre welcomed the group and provided an overview of the challenges their centre face, and how SOHITCOM helped the centre in addressing some of these challenges in the area of mother and child care. A live demonstration of the system was then offered by the actual end users of the system in the health centre. The project leader and the staff in the health centre also answered the questions asked by the group, and summarised the difficulties encountered during project implementation, and how these were addressed through active collaboration between the research team and the staff in the health centre staff.</p>
Communication for Influence	<p>While the research projects in the ICT4D Middle East programme strive to produce high quality and informative results, the impact of these results can only be realised when they are properly communicated to the right audience. In order to support the research teams and their organisations in designing, planning and executing effective media outreach and communication campaigns to disseminate their research results, a full day training on Communication for Influence was provided by William New, Editor in Chief of Intellectual Property Watch in Geneva.</p> <p>Developing a successful outreach and dissemination campaign starts by a clear definition of the goals that the research team aims to achieve. Without a clear understanding of what needs to be achieved, the target audience for the campaign cannot be identified, and the message cannot be formatted and framed in a way that suits each audience. For example, if the ultimate goal is an important policy change based on evidence produced by the research project, the dissemination campaign must recognise the busy schedule of policy makers, and tailor the message accordingly. While policy makers are very unlikely to read a lengthy academic paper or a project report, they are usually receptive to policy briefs that outline the research findings and evidence in a concise manner, and provide direct recommendations for action. This was reinforced by an activity for participants to formulate the main policy changes they would like to see supported by the evidence generated by their projects, and develop draft policy briefs to promote these changes. The facilitator then provided feedback on the drafted messages and policy briefs, along with suggestions for improvement.</p> <p>In another activity, participants were asked to assume different roles in a role play exercise on policy influence and negotiations. In the role play,</p>



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	different stakeholder organisations are engaged in a debate about government support for free and open source software. The stakeholders include a regional and a global NGO promoting free and open source software, the country's intellectual property office, a library, a free software company, a commercial multinational software company, consumer groups and international organisations. Very interesting discussions happened during the role play, and the communication expert offered his comments and feedback towards the end of the session.
Outcomes and Next Steps	<p>In the final day, the new strategy for ICT4D at IDRC was presented, and the impact it will have on the partner projects discussed. The opportunity was then given to participants to ask questions and share ideas about their views for the next stage of the programme.</p> <p>In order to assess the extent to which the workshop has achieved its aims, two feedback mechanisms were instituted: the informal eyes and ears, and a formal evaluation towards the end of the workshop. Collected feedback indicates that participants benefited a lot from the peer learning and project presentation sessions. The evaluation sessions also improved their understanding of Outcome Mapping, though the topic still requires further elaboration. Participants felt that the field visit was a good opportunity to appreciate the issues related to implementing projects in the real world.</p> <p>For the next steps, the team agreed to pursue opportunities for a dedicated training workshop on Outcome Mapping. They also committed to develop and execute elaborate dissemination and communication plans for the research findings of their projects to the widest audiences possible, and to place particular emphasis on informing policy makers to enact evidence-based policy changes to address the issues investigated by each project.</p>

#### 4. Evaluation

Overall feedback from participants showed that they benefited from the various sessions and activities of the workshop. Figure 2 shows the overall evaluation as submitted by the participants.



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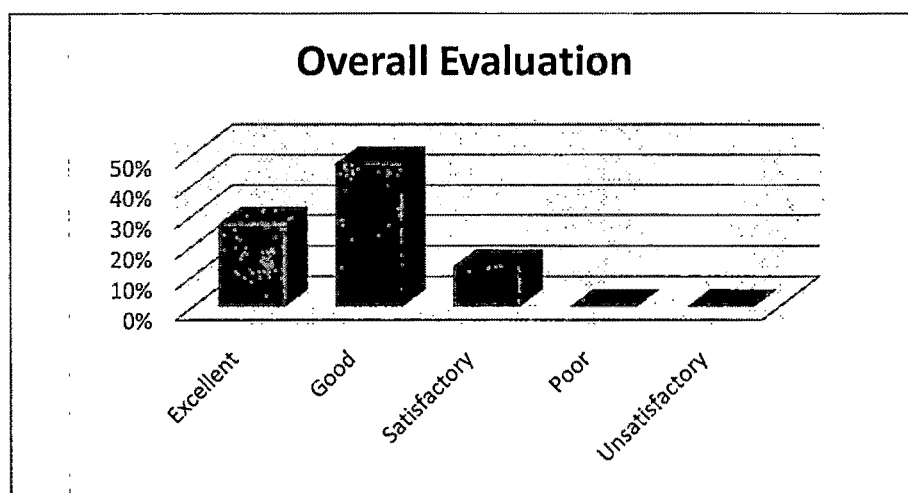


Figure 2: Overall workshop evaluation

Figure 3 shows the evaluation of specific aspects of the workshop.

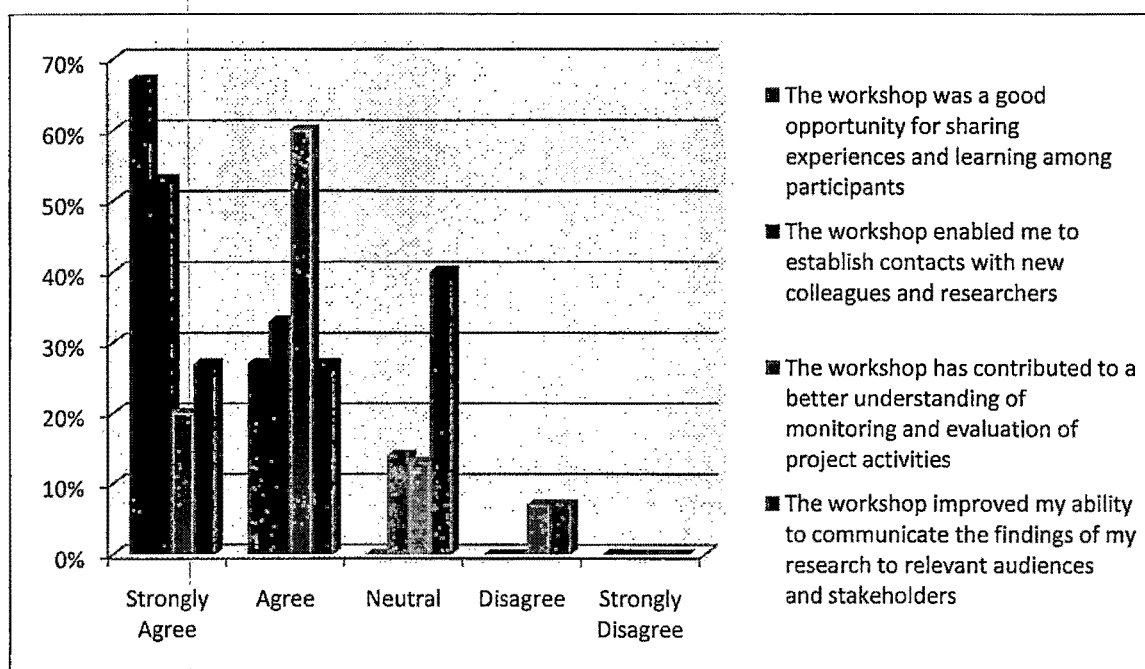


Figure 3: workshop evaluation

Figure 4 shows the evaluation of the facilitators.





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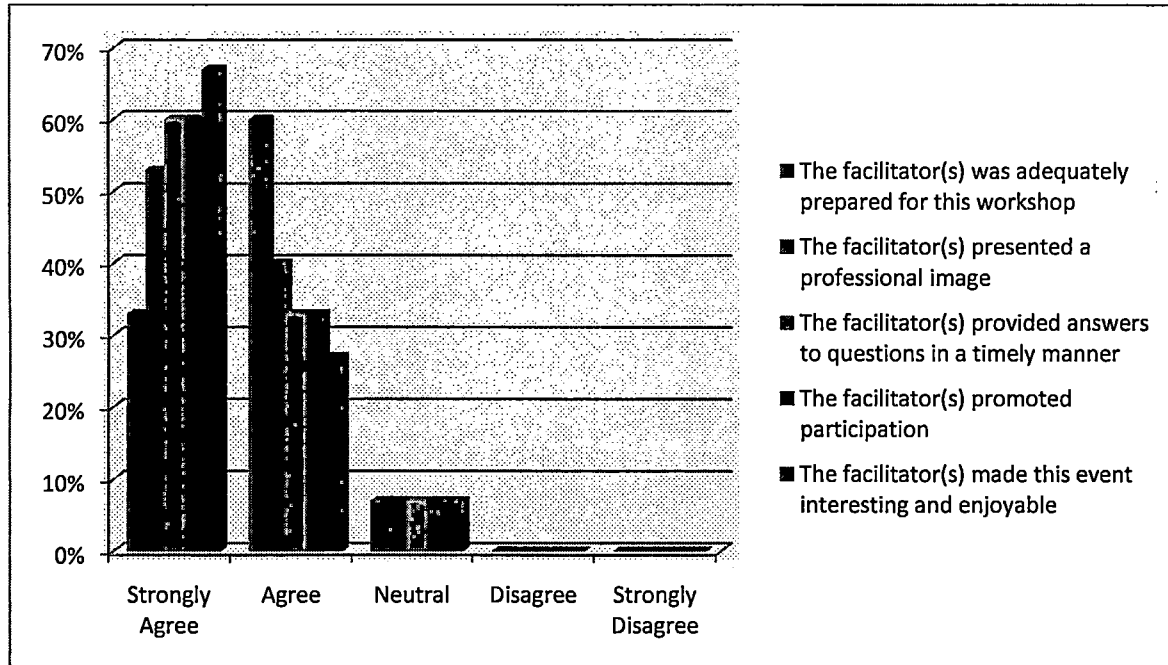


Figure 4: Evaluation of facilitators

Figure 5 shows the evaluation for administration.

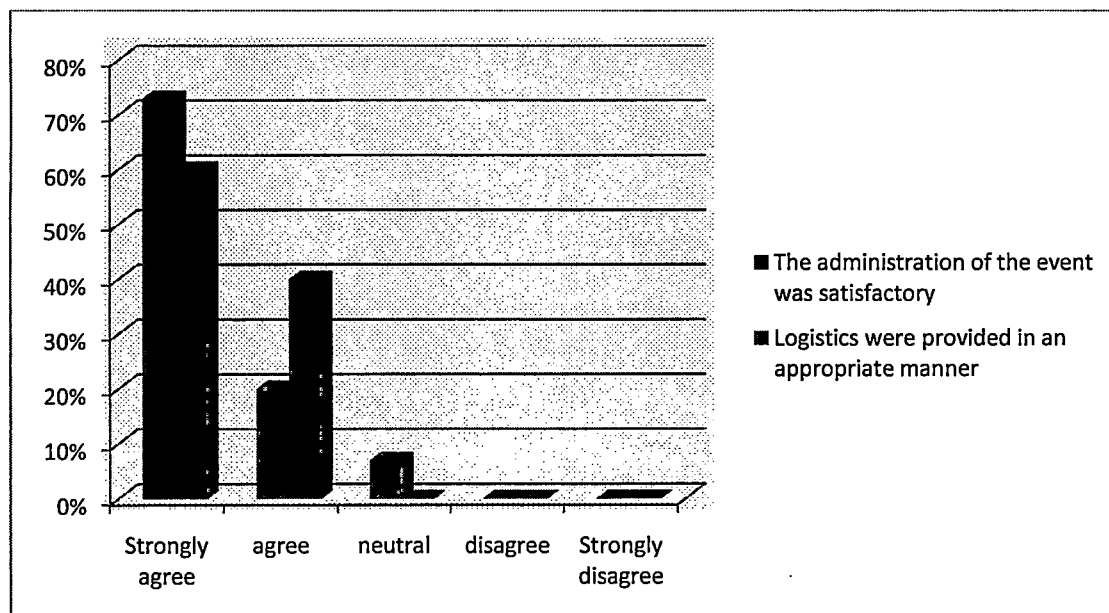


Figure 5: Evaluation of administration of the event



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Finally, Figure 6 shows the evaluation of the equipment and facilities used during the workshop.

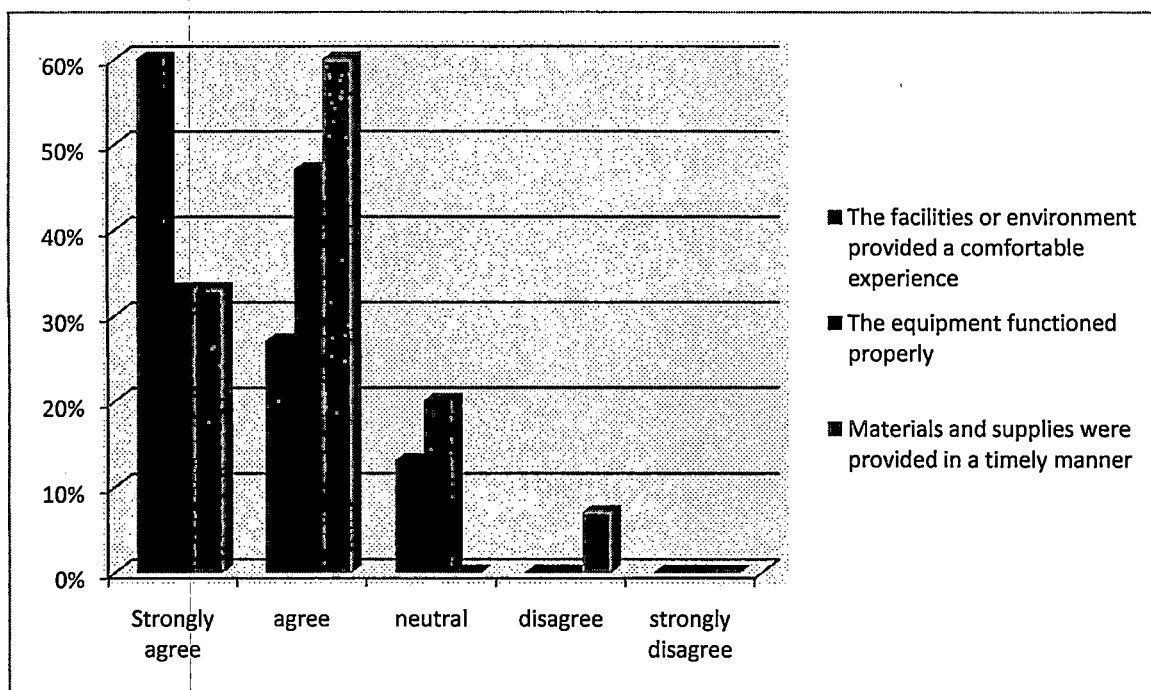


Figure 6: Evaluation of facilities and equipments